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TWO PIONEER DOCTORS OF LOS ANGELES.

By H. D. Barrows.

In turning over to the Historical Society the accompanying brief historical document (which I lately received from Ex-Sheriff Wm. R. Rowland), containing the signatures of four early physicians of Los Angeles, I have thought that some account of two of the signers whom I knew quite well, would be of interest to the members of our Society.

The document referred to, which Ex-Sheriff Rowland found among old papers of the Sheriff's office, was a public notice, or "Aviso," of the scale of charges (in Spanish), by the doctors of that period (January, 1850), for their professional services, as follows:

Aviso.

A la junta de la Facultad de Medicos de Los Angeles, Enero 14, 1850, la siguiente lista de precios era adoptado:

| | | |
|---------|---|--------|
| Art. 1. | Por una prescription en la oficina..... | \$5.00 |
| Art. 2. | Por una visita en la ciudad de dia..... | 5.00 |
| Art. 3. | Por una vista en la ciudad de noche..... | 10.00 |
| Art. 4. | Por una visita en el campo par cada legua.. | 5.00 |
| Art. 5. | Por una Sangria..... | 5.00 |
| Art. 6. | Por cada aplicacion de Ventoses..... | 10.00 |

Firmamos nuestros nombres al antecedente:

[Firmados.]

CHAS. R. CULLEN,
A. I. BLACKBURN,
J. W. DODGE,
GUILLERMO B. OSBOURN.

(Translation.)

Notice.

At a meeting of the Medical Faculty of Los Angeles, January 14, 1850, the following list of prices was adopted:

| | | |
|---------|---|--------|
| Art. 1. | For an office prescription..... | \$5.00 |
| Art. 2. | For a day visit within the city..... | 5.00 |
| Art. 3. | For a night visit within the city..... | 10.00 |
| Art. 4. | For a visit in the country, for each league.. | 5.00 |

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Art. 5. For bleeding | 5.00 |
| Art. 6. For cupping | 10.00 |

We subscribe our names to the foregoing:

[Signers.]

CHAS. R. CULLEN,
A. I. BLACKBURN,
J. W. DODGE,
WM. B. OSBOURN.

Dr. Guillermo B. Osbourn, one of the signers, who was a native of New York, came to California in 1847 in Col. Stephenson's regiment. He established the first drug store in Los Angeles in 1850, which was succeeded in '51 by that of McFarland and Downey. Daguerreotypes were first taken in Los Angeles by Dr. Osbourn and Moses Searles, on August 9, 1851. In fact Dr. Osbourn's versatility was something remarkable. It is not easy to recount all the official positions he filled, or the numerous important public functions he performed. In those early days immediately after the change of Government, by means of his keen intellectual ability, together with his knowledge of the Spanish language, he made himself a very useful citizen in various capacities. When, as often happened in that period, an acquaintance with Spanish was a necessity, he often acted as Deputy Sheriff. In 1853 he was appointed Postmaster of this city by President Pierce. In 1855 he projected the first artesian well in Southern California, at the foot of the hills not very far from the present junction of First street and Broadway. It reached a depth of 800 feet in June, 1856, being still in blue clay, when it was abandoned for want of funds.

In 1852 fruit grafts of improved varieties had been introduced by Mayor J. G. Nichols. In 1855 Dr. Osbourn imported from Rochester, a grand collection of roses and other choice shrubbery, as well as many varieties of the best American fruit trees, which up to that time were almost unknown here. He was the first, too, in October, 1854, to ship East, fresh Los Angeles grapes, which were exhibited and commanded admiration at a meeting of the business committee of the New York Agricultural Society at Albany. And it is worthy of mention in this connection, that as late as November, 1856, when Matthew Keller sent a like specimen, it was almost doubted at the U. S. Patent Office, "if such products were common in California."

Henry Osbourn, a son of the doctor by his first wife, was for years and until recently, an interpreter in our local courts. He lost his life through an accident not very long ago.

Dr. Osbourn's second wife, who was a native Californian, is I believe, still living in this city.

Dr. Osbourn, with all his versatility, was not always over-scrupulous as to the means he sometimes employed in carrying out his schemes. He once recounted to me, without a semblance of self reproach, but on the contrary with a palpable chuckle because of his success, how he took an active part on a certain occasion in a political contest. Sometime in the early '50s, when an election was on for a State senator, and San Bernardino was a part of Los Angeles county, he was exceedingly anxious to carry the precinct of Agua Mansa, which was mostly settled by Mexicans, who knew very little or no English. So he went to the Padre who had more influence in his parish than any other person, and used his most suave methods of electioneering with the Dominie in behalf of his candidate; and then to clinch the matter, he asked the Padre to pray for the repose of the soul of his mother—who was then alive and well in New York State. And on the next feast day the wily doctor was on hand at the church and on his knees,, joining the Padre and his flock, in praying for the repose of his mother's soul. He added with just a shade of exultation, that his candidate was elected.

Drs. Blackburn and Dodge, two other signers of the accompanying document, I was not acquainted with.

Dr. Charles R. Cullen I knew intimately, as he was my room-mate for a considerable portion of the time, from my arrival in Los Angeles in 1854, till he left for his home in Virginia in the latter part of '56.

Dr. Cullen was a native of Virginia, and a graduate of Brown University. He and his brother John came to California soon after the discovery of the mines. The doctor was a cultured and genial gentleman whom all who made his acquaintance, could not help liking. The Spanish-speaking portion of our community of that period were especially attached to him, both as a sympathetic friend and as a physician; and for years after he went away, I remember that if his name was mentioned in the presence of those native Californians who had made his acquaintance, they would invariably manifest pleasure at the recall of his memory, and would exclaim: "Ay Don Carlos! donde esta el?" or, "Que buen hombre era!" or similar expressions of kindly feelings towards him.

When the San Francisco Bulletin was established, Mr. C. O. Gerberding (father of several persons of that name in California,

and also I believe of Mrs. Senator Bard), was the business manager, and James King, of William, was the brave and accomplished editor. Mr. Gerberding and Dr. Cullen had been old friends in Richmond, before they came to California; and as the management of the paper desired to have a permanent resident correspondent at Los Angeles, they entered into an engagement with Dr. Cullen to fill that position, paying him at the rate of ten dollars a column. Late in November, '56, Dr. Cullen concluded to return East, and stopping on his way at San Francisco, it appears recommended me, without my knowledge, as his successor as correspondent of the *Bulletin*; and accordingly he wrote at their request, asking me to keep up the correspondence, on the same terms, etc., which I did for several years thereafter, writing generally by each semi-monthly steamer, giving a general resume of current events in Southern California. The doctor's letters, as were mine, were headed in the columns of the *Bulletin*—in small capitals: "Letter from Los Angeles"—"From Our Own Correspondent," and were signed "Observer." This signature, however, I soon dropped. My first letter was dated December 6, 1856. I would like to add that in all my dealings with Mr. Gerberding, the business manager, I found him to be a thorough gentleman and a good friend.

Before I had any connection with the paper, the assassination of James King of William had given the paper much prominence, and it had already become and it long remained the leading journal of the Pacific Coast. It was very ably edited ostensibly by a brother of James King of William, but in reality by James Nisbet, a Scotchman, one of the most industrious and the finest literary journalists whom I ever had any acquaintance with. Afterwards, Dr. Tuthill was associated with Mr. Nisbet and they made a very strong editorial team.

In 1857 I made a trip East, and I went to Richmond to visit Dr. Cullen. I found his mother and sisters and also his uncle, the widely known and venerable Dr. Patrick Cullen, by whom I was cordially welcomed. Dr. Charley Cullen was then located and practising his profession near Hanover Court House, a very few years afterwards the locality of some terrific fighting in the great Civil War.

In after years I kept up more or less intermittent correspondence with the doctor, till his death several years ago.

Dr. Cullen was a thoroughly conscientious man and a religious man—co-operating with Parson Bland, Revs. Mr. Brier and Mr.

Woods, as they came and made brief stays—in all sincerity, in which he differed widely from Dr. Osbourn, whose only church affiliation, so far as I knew, was that serio-comic episode at “Agua Mansa.”

When the late Dr. J .C. Fletcher first came to Los Angeles, Dr. Cullen wrote me asking me to hunt him up, which I did, and I found him to be a very cultured and widely traveled gentleman. He told me that he had resided for a lengthy period at Rio de Janiero, Brazil, where he had made the personal acquaintance of Dom Pedro, the venerable emperor of Brazil, and also that he had lived at Naples, Italy, 18 years.

Dr. Cullen and Dr. Fletcher were classmates and graduates of Brown University.